

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00

AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ITFE-05

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P 171650Z JUL 75

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4705

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 5666

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, TH

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND--UNHCR

1. ON JULY 16 UNHCR SADRUDIN AGA KHAN MET IN GENEVA WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THAILAND CHATICHAI CHOONHAVAN.
FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF THAT DISCUSSION AS REPORTED
TO MISSOFF BY HCR.

2. FONMIN STATED THAT THERE ARE NOW SOME 100,000 REFUGEES
IN THAILAND INCLUDING 40-50,000 VIETNAMESE WHO HAVE BEEN
IN COUNTRY OVER 20 YEARS. THE REMAINEDER COMPRISED GROUPS OF
DISPLACED PERSONS FROM CAMBODIA, LAOS, AND VIETNAM
WHO ARRIVED RELATIVELY RECENTLY. HE STATED THAT THAILAND'S
CURRENT POLICY WAS TO MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONS
WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND TO CHANGE THAILAND'S IMAGE
FROM BEING A MILITARY BASE TO THAT OF A BASE FOR
HUMANITARAIN ASSISTANCE. THIS RESPECT HIS GOVERNMENT
WISHED UNHCR TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE. HE WAS ANXIOUS TO
SEE A RELIEF OPERATION FOR BENEFIT OF REFUGEES AND
DISPLACED PERSONS STARTED ASAP AND OBSERVED THAT A
COORDINATED EFFORT WAS REQUIRED. HE EXPRRESED
INTENTION TO INFORM UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ABOUT THE
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PROBLEM IN HIS SPEECH DURING GENERAL DEBATE IN EARLY

OCTOBER INCLUDING DUE REFERENCE TO ROLE OF UNHCR.

3. HCR ASSURED FONMIN THAT HIS OFFICE WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND IN HELPING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OUTLINED BY THE MINISTER. HCR EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF GOT'S POSITION RESPECT ITS WISH TO BE HUMANITARIAN BASE FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE DISPLACED PERSONS FOR WHOM HE, THE UNHCR, WAS READY TO PROVIDE HIS GODD OFFICES.
REFERRING TO RECENT LETTER FROM THAI FOREIGN MINISTRY, HCR INFORMED FONMIN THAT HIS OFFICE WAS ALREADY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL PARTIES CONCERNED IN BANGKOK REGARDING UNHCR ASSISTANCE WITH VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, RESETTLEMENT AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE PENDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS. HCR NOTED THAT A MEETING WOULD BE HELD SOON IN BANGKOK UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP THAI RED CROSS AND ATTENDED BY UNHCR, ICRC, ICEM IN THAI MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERIOR FOR PURPOSES DEVELOPING SUITABLE PROGRAMS.

4. FONMIN EXPRESSED WISH THAT UNHCR PRESENCE IN THAILAND BE STRENGTHENED AND HE PLEDGED FULL FACILITIES AND SUPPORT. HCR REPLIED THAT MEASURES TO THIS EFFECT WOULD BE TAKEN VERY SOON.

5. IN GENERAL REVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION IN THAILAND AND HER EXTERNAL POLICY, THE FONMIN DREW ATTENTION TO GEO-POLITICAL SITUATION OF HIS COUNTRY, HER MEMBERSHIP OF ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS) AND THE KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION OF ASEAN CONCERNING NEUTRALITY OF THE REGION. THE MINISTER STRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S WISH TO REMAIN A NEUTRAL NATION AND HE FELT THAT EVEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THAILAND TO BE A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. HE WAS RETURNING TO BANGKOK ON 17 JULY AND FEW DAYS LATER WOULD START ON A MISSION TO SINGAPORE, PHILIPPINES, NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA AFTER WHICH HE WOULD BE VISITING HANOI. HE RECALLED THE RECENT VISITS OF GOVERNMENTAL DELEGATIONS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC
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REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM. AS REGARDS THE DRVN, AN IMPORTANT POINT WAS THE QUESTION OF THE 40-50,000 VIETNAMESE WHO HAD BEEN IN THAILAND FOR MANY YEARS AND THE MAJORITY OF WHOM SHOULD BE RETURNING HOME. THIS POINT WOULD BE TAKEN UP AGAIN BY HIM IN HANOI. IN HIS TALKS WITH THE PRG, THE LATTER HAD INDICATED THEY WERE DISTURBED BY THE FACT THAT THAILAND HAD

HAD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER RVN. THE FONMIN HAD POINTED OUT TO THE PRG THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RVN WAS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED GOVERNMENT AND THAILAND'S POLICY IS TO TRY AND HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS. THE TALKS WITH THE PRG WERE THE FIRST CONTACT BETWEEN THE RSVN AND THAILAND AND FUTURE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE HELD FOR ESTABLISHING NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

6. THE MINISTER ALSO TOUCHED UPON RECENT TALKS THAT THE THAI PRIME MINISTER, MR. KUKRIT PRAMOJ, AND HE HAD HAD IN PEKING WHERE THEY HAD MET WITH BOTH CHAIRMAN MAO TSE TUNG AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CHOU EN LAI. THE TALKS HAD BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL AND THE THAI VISITORS HAD ACHIEVED 100 PERCENT WHAT THEY WENT TO ACHIEVE. THERE WERE THREE MAJOR POINTS:

A. NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS; DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED;

B. MUTUAL RESPECT; THIS INCLUDED EQUALITY IN TRADING RELATIONS, I.E., THAT CHINA WOULD PURCHASE COMMODITIES FROM THAILAND FOR A SAME AMOUNT AS THAILAND IMPORTED FROM CHINA; AND

C. NON-INTERFERENCE IN EACH OTHERS AFFAIRS. THIS POINT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE FOR THAILAND. THE DISCUSSIONS WERE MOST CORDIAL AND HE EXPECTED A FRUITFUL COOPERATION WITH CHINA.

7. THE FONMIN SAID HE HAD KNOWN MR. CHOU EN LAI
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FOR A LONG TIME AND HAD VISITED HIM FREQUENTLY IN THE PAST. DURING THE RECENT VISIT TO PEKING, THE PRIME MINISTER AND HE HAD ALSO DISCUSSED THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA WHICH WORRIED THEM CONSIDERABLY. THE FONMIN HAD INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE RETURN OF PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK TO PHNOM PENH. THE CHINESE SAID THEY DID NOT KNOW WHEN, IF EVER, PRINCE SIHANOUK WOULD RETURN TO PHNOM PENH. FROM MR. CHOU EN LAI'S REMARKS, THE THAI MINISTER HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT CHINA WAS NOT INFORMED EITHER OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN CAMBODIA AT THE MOMENT, WHO OR WHAT BODY WAS IN CHARGE AND WHAT THE FUTURE WOULD BRING. THE THAI FONMIN BELIEVED THAT THERE WOULD BE FURTHER INFLUXES OF CAMBODIANS INTO THAILAND AND, IN FACT, THERE WERE NEWCOMERS ALMOST DAILY.

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ACTION ORM-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4706

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GENEVA 5666

8. THE FONMIN WAS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THE SITUATION
IN LAOS WHERE A RECENT RESHUFFLE OF THE GOVERNMENT
HAD TAKEN PLACE. THE PREVIOUS FONMIN, PHAGNA PHOUMI
VONGVICHIT, WHILE ADHERING TO THE PATHET LAO
PRINCIPLES, WAS A MODERATE MAN IN THE APPLICATION
OF THE POLICIES AND THE THAI FONMIN HAD HAD GOOD
RELATIONS WITH HIM.

9. REVERTING TO THE PROBLEM OF THE DISPLACED
PERSONS IN THAILAND, THE MINISTER SAID THAT THAILAND'S
POLICY IS NOT TO PERMIT THEM TO FIND A NEW HOME IN
THAILAND. HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO REALIZED THAT
THEY CANNOT BE SENT BACK TO THEIR COUNTRIES IF
THEIR LIFE WOULD BE AT STAKE. IN THIS CONNECTION HE NOTED
THAT A GROUP OF CAMBODIANS HAD RETURNED
HOME ONLY TO BE EXECUTED SHORTLY AFTER
ARRIVAL. THEREFORE, A RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRIES
WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE GUARANTEES FOR THEIR LIVES
AND FUTURES.

10. REITERATING THAT THE REFUGEE PROBLEM WAS VAST
IN HIS COUNTRY, THE FONMIN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WISHED
TO ENSURE THAT THE REFUGEES WOULD NOT BE USED BY

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ANYONE FOR MILITARY OR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES
AGAINST THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. THIS WAS ONE OF
THE REASONS THAT HE FELT THE UN, I.E., UNHCR,
SHOULD BE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN AID TO THEM AS A
SAFEGUARD AGAINST SUCH A POSSIBILITY. THE HCR
STRESSED THAT IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE POLICY OF HIS
OFFICE TO ASSIST ONLY NEEDY PERSONS WHO WISHED TO
LIVE PEACEFULLY IN THE COUNTRY OF ASYLUM WHILE THEY
WERE THERE AND UNHCR FULLY ENDORSED THE VIEW OF
THE MINISTER.

11. FINALLY, THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXTENDED AN
INVITATION TO THE HCR TO COME TO BANKOK AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE TO SEE THE SITUATION FOR HIMSELF.
THE HCR WARMLY ACCEPTED THE INVITATION AND
TENTATIVELY A VISIT IN THE FIRST HALF OF SEPTEMBER
WAS AGREED UPON. DALE

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